How to Import a PDF into Excel: A Step-by-Step Guide

Handling data in PDF format is common, especially when dealing with reports, invoices, or statements. However, extracting that data into a usable format like Excel can often seem tricky. Whether you're working with tables, lists, or structured data inside a PDF, Excel offers simple ways to bring that information into your spreadsheet for further analysis or editing.

In this blog post, we'll walk through several effective methods to [import a PDF into Excel with ease.](#)

Why Import a PDF into Excel?

PDFs are excellent for preserving layout and design but not ideal for data manipulation. Excel, on the other hand, is designed for organizing, calculating, and analyzing data. Importing a PDF into Excel allows you to:

- Edit and update information more easily

- Perform calculations or data analysis

- Create charts and visualizations

- Combine data from multiple sources

Method 1: Using Excel's Built-in PDF Import Feature

Recent versions of Microsoft Excel (Excel 2016 and later, with updates) include a built-in PDF import tool. Here's how to use it:

Step-by-Step:

1. **Open Excel** and go to the worksheet where you want to import the data.

2. Click on the **Data** tab in the ribbon.

3. Select **Get Data** > **From File** > **From PDF**.

4. Browse to your PDF file and click **Import**.

5. Excel will analyze the file and display the **Navigator** pane showing all the tables or pages it detected.

6. Select the table or page that contains the data you need.

7. Click **Load** to bring the data into your Excel worksheet.

Tip: Use the **Transform Data** button if you want to make changes before importing, such as removing columns or adjusting formats.

Method 2: Copy and Paste from a PDF Reader

If you're dealing with a simple table or a small dataset, manual copying can work too.

How:

1. Open the PDF file in your default PDF reader (e.g., Adobe Acrobat Reader).

2. Use the **selection tool** to highlight the data.

3. Right-click and select **Copy**.

4. Open Excel and **paste** the data into the worksheet.

Note: The formatting may not always carry over neatly. You might need to adjust rows and columns manually.

Method 3: Use Online PDF to Excel Converters

Several online tools can convert PDFs to Excel-friendly formats. Simply upload your PDF, and the tool will provide a downloadable Excel file.

Popular examples include:

- Smallpdf

- ILovePDF

- PDFtoExcel

While these tools are convenient, keep in mind the following:

- Accuracy can vary depending on how the PDF was created.

- Sensitive or confidential documents should be handled carefully, especially with online tools.

Method 4: Convert Using Adobe Acrobat Pro

Adobe Acrobat Pro offers a robust conversion feature for exporting PDFs directly to Excel.

Steps:

1. Open the PDF in Adobe Acrobat Pro.

2. Go to **File** > **Export To** > **Spreadsheet** > **Microsoft Excel Workbook**.

3. Choose your location and save the file.

4. Open the file in Excel to review and refine the data.

This method is generally more accurate and preserves the formatting better than manual methods or free tools.

Final Tips

- **Check for merged cells**: After import, make sure cells are properly aligned. Merged cells can cause issues when analyzing data.

- **Automate**: If you're importing data regularly, consider using Excel's **Power Query** to automate the process.

Conclusion

Importing a PDF into Excel doesn't have to be a hassle. With the right approach, you can quickly move data from static PDF documents into dynamic Excel spreadsheets. Whether you choose Excel's built-in tool, manual copy-pasting, online converters, or Adobe Acrobat Pro, each method has its place depending on the complexity and sensitivity of your data.